

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

16 February 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. M. S. Malkin
Office of the Assistant Secretary
of Defense (Intelligence)
Department of Defense

SUBJECT : COINS Review Group Report

1. The following comments are prompted by an examination of the draft conclusions and recommendations of the report. They are along the lines I spoke to you about a few days ago.

2. From the user point of-view, I agree with the recommendations to continue COINS funding, provide for gradual improvements, and to make it possible for the system to handle TK data. The system really cannot be viable unless the exchange of TK information is permitted.

3. In my view, however, the principal conclusions are laced with words whose cumulative effect is over-statement of the need for action to stimulate widespread on-line and interactive file access. There is too little recognition of the difficulties to be faced in accomplishing the results. Throughout the paper, there is a consistently high profile given to the requirement for being "on-line." Other agencies may have such a requirement for on-line file sharing, but I believe that these statements are at variance with the needs of our business day-to-day in this Agency and even with our needs as we see them developing for some time ahead.

4. There is danger, I feel, in letting the idea of system upgrading slip by without specifically addressing cost and timing. When the upgrading concept is stretched--as the recommendations provide--to the idea of the entire networks being interactive, a whole new dimension of system complexity and cost is entered. The draft that we have seen calls for the COINS Project Management Office to submit a detailed plan for upgrading COINS to provide interactive capability and to

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include world-wide users. For my part, the user's needs for such a system--as covered in the report--are not convincing.

5. One other point should be made, stemming from the "on-line" thrust of the paper. The conclusions call for adding new files to the COINS system and for system upgrading. One of these new files would be CRS' AEGIS file, which is not now in the system. There would be significant problems of practicality and cost for the Agency in putting this entire file on-line within the COINS network. The Agency does not now have the software to make this file on-line in the manner called for in the paper, and there could be further security considerations beyond the TK problem..

6. Another of the paper's findings is that there are shortcomings in the way COINS is presently managed. The Review Group did indeed perceive such shortcomings, but NSA was not seen as the culprit so much as the victim of a situation in which a single agency has been asked to substitute for community-level direction and authority.

7. To overcome this, you proposed that

"The ASD(I) be appointed COINS executive agent under the auspices of the DCI with the COINS Project Management Office (PMO) made responsible to the executive agency."

This, along with the recommendation on the program budget action, are recommendations which you--as chairman--might make to [REDACTED] might make to the Director, but I do not believe they should be a part of the Review report itself, or its recommendations.

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8. I suggest--if this is a paper which is to be forwarded as a Group Report--that I get together with you or Mr. Solat to talk about these points. As it stands, I can't fully subscribe to all of the findings. If you agree, I can come along to your office at almost any time.

[REDACTED]
CIA Member

COINS Review Group

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